

## **State-socialism, development, and gender relations in rural Hungary**

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### **Introduction.**

The effects of capitalist encroachment into non-capitalist societies has provoked much debate regarding theories of societal change and development. Central to these discussions is whether to regard the peasantry as its own mode of production, articulated with capitalist relations, or as a social class inevitably subsumable in one form or another under capitalism (Chayanov, 1927; deJanvry, 1981; Goodman and Redclift, 1982). More recently, the focus has been partially reoriented towards understanding the intra- as well as the inter-societal impact of peasant transformations within capitalist rural development. Theories on the peasantry have been attacked on the grounds that they essentialise such a social category by assuming internal homogeneity and relying on the spurious dichotomy of production and reproduction, or political and domestic economy (Redclift, N., 1985; Whatmore, 1991).

Since the early twentieth century debates on the "agrarian question", the profuse writing on the peasantry under state-socialism have continued to evade the internal dynamics of households. In addition, most research on state-socialist rural development and agriculture has aimed at exposing the inadequacies of state-socialism in general (Bideleux, 1985; Brada and Wädekin, 1989; Paul et al., 1992; Pryor, 1992), rather than confronting the issue of social transformation as it pertains to economic reorganisation (cf., Swain, 1985; Völgyes, 1980). I herein attempt to explain the relationship between internal household structure and the state-socialist version of rural development. The implications of this study is that proletarianisation or peasant transformations occur not necessarily as a result of capitalist development per se inasmuch as a consequence of the application of the principles of so-called modernisation, which both capitalism and state-socialism share. Modernisation is herein regarded as a set of assumptions about societies derived from an a priori belief in evolutionary progress, or stage-theory of development. Such an approach is characterised by ahistoricity and unreflexivity and the linearity and homogeneity of social phenomena. National policies, implemented through coercion, are the principal media of its materialisation in society (Cowen and Shenton, 1996; Escobar, 1995; Marchand and Parpart, 1995; Massey, 1995; Parpart, 1995; So, 1990).

The principal contention is that rural development cannot be conceived solely as the attempt to improve the economic status of a society, but as the simultaneous effort at asserting a mode of control over the recipients of economic development schemes for the (re-)establishment of political and economic hierarchy. Such national economic differentiations reflect a nation's position within the international division of labour (Massey, 1995: 80). Hence, state-socialist rural development must also be viewed as having materialised within particular political economic processes occurring at national and international scales and in conjuncture with a particular set of internal household divisions of labour. Changes and continuities in household structure did not necessarily concur with the volition of central planners (nor with that of various Soviet regimes) and at times active resistance against development schemes resulted in a different rural development modality and even change to the overall planning structure. The process of rural development involved a hierarchical sequence of labour subordination deployed within changed social structures which remained nevertheless not too dissimilar from

prior patriarchal and capitalist/feudal relations (Erdei, 1988). This constitutes what I term the patriarchal rehierarchisation of society. By patriarchal rehierarchisation, I mean the restructuring of economic principles, the restratification of society, and the change of household production relations based on the redefinition of both the source of power for masculinity and its mode of domination. In other words, radical change demands a redefinition of the structures within which it develops and pre-existing structures provide important continuities which allow change itself to become realisable (Böröcz, 1995-1996; Mingione, 1991).

### **Rural development and Stalinist industrialisation: 1949-1968.**

The period between 1949 and 1956 was characterised by a thorough reform in land distribution in which the agrariat<sup>1</sup> and dwarf-holders became small-holders within the cooperative system, and hence petty commodity producers (middle-peasants were excluded until 1959). Immense asymmetries characteristic of the previous latifundist system were expunged. Land reforms radically altered the structure of the Hungarian peasantry by reducing the role of land ownership as a principal source of masculine power and class differentiation (Erdei, 1971, 1974; Sozan, 1988). The transformation of the peasantry into a "revolutionary" proletariat occurred through forced property expropriation, "collectivisation", and the inception of state farms in order to centralise and thereby control production so as to extract compulsory deliveries, paid at meagre prices.

The dependence of the Rákosi regime on Soviet military, political, and economic<sup>2</sup> support ensured that Hungarian rural development would follow the Stalinist path. This involved an emphasis on rapid industrialisation in order to increase production of manufactured industrial goods for the Soviet Union and thereby sustain its expanding industrial-military complex. The revolutionised farming system sustained the development of industrialisation by transferring surplus-value generated by agricultural production to industry and the military complex through central accumulation and reinvestment. The massive construction of industrial spaces resulted in the absorption of enormous numbers of workers into the industrial sector. Most of the total workforce was composed of agricultural labourers (in 1949, more than 50% of all workers were involved in agriculture), who migrated en masse to the new industrial centres. Agricultural labour thereby became increasingly scarce and predominantly manual (Böröcz, 1992; Orolin, 1977; Répássi, 1991; Swain, 1992).

Those of the agrariat and petty commodity producers (pcp) who were regarded as skilled were mostly men and those who were regarded as manual or semi-skilled were mostly women and elderly, lower stratum, and/or lower class<sup>3</sup> men (henceforth contracted

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<sup>1</sup>Landless agricultural workers, who, under state-socialism, became the agricultural version of the proletariat. They are to be distinguished from those agricultural workers who progressively obtained more control over their household plot as a resource for both subsistence and market activities. Such agricultural workers were de facto petty commodity producers. Commodity here does not refer to capitalist circulation but to a peculiar state-socialist form which entailed a more centralised accumulation and circulation system of surplus-values.

<sup>2</sup>Through the supply of energy sources and primary materials for industrial manufacturing.

<sup>3</sup>By class, I am referring to structured economic inequalities created by differential access to and control of, as well as ownership of the means of production, recognising that under state-Leninism the notions of access to and control of the means of production were more determinant (Burawoy, 1985; Castoriadis, 1973; Post and Wright, 1989; Szelényi et al., 1994). Additionally, I consider Lampland's emphasis on the

to lower class men). The incentives of higher salaries and social benefits became a preserve of the "skilled". The result of the migration was therefore the concentration of manual labourers under the directorship of party functionaries and sometimes of previous landlords (Bell, 1984; Hann, 1980; Répássi, 1991). Many of the agrariat and estate workers, who came to comprise most of the workforce in the state-controlled agricultural system, returned immediately to their subordinate status of yore, albeit under a different regime (Berend, 1990; Swain, 1985; Völgyes, 1980).

The tensions resulting from the violence of the Rákosi regime (Rév, 1987) erupted with the uprisings of 1956, which the Soviet and national military complex murderously suppressed (Swain, 1992). The aftermath resulted in a reaffirmation of Soviet colonial rule and policies and an intensification of draconian measures during the first post-insurrection years. It also marked the beginning of a gradual introduction of economic concessions to the agrariat, pcp, and the proletariat. The government became more willing to ensure that their standard of living would not be sacrificed for the resolution of overinvestment problems, even at the risk of incurring debt.

In fact, a trade deficit was the norm in both COMECON and capitalist trade. Following the revolt, foreign debt increased dramatically, as more goods began to be imported from capitalist countries in order to appease the populace. Between 1959 and 1963, the value of debt payments made to capitalist creditor countries, which demanded payment in capitalist currencies, exceeded the value of goods exported to them. Further borrowing became a necessity in order to prevent default, so that much of national production began to be increasingly appropriated by capitalist core countries (Berend, 1990: 114-118; Bőrcz, 1992; Hann, 1990; Swain, 1985, 1992).

The channelling of most of the national income into centralised accumulation for military and industrial development characterised the Stalinist government's productivist priorities until the revolt. Surplus-value, after 1956, started to be redirected more to consumption than accumulation. However, labour subordination to the Party continued through the average wage control policy of 1957 inter alia, whereby workers' wages were suppressed in order to accumulate more capital for investment. Through this mechanism and unequal pricing practices, central planners were able to continue the redirection of surplus-value from agricultural production into industrial development, without resorting to direct coercion. Between 1961 and 1965, the chasm between the two sectors was somewhat reduced. Still, investment in agriculture and industry accounted for 18.6% and 44.3% of the total respectively (Berend, 1990; Swain, 1985, 1992).

"Collectivisation" campaigns resumed between 1959 and 1961, rapidly succeeding in the eradication of most of the private land ownership that remained. This consolidation under both direct and indirect state management involved a decrease in number and an increase in cooperative and state farm size so as to promote large-scale production. The

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extent of control of one's own labour and that of others as another apposite variable in determining the degree of economic stratification under state-socialism. Stratum refers to economic differentiation within a class. For instance, an agricultural worker during this period would belong to an inferior stratum relative to an industrial worker. A manager of a cooperative commanded the labour of other cooperative members. moreover, a manager had more access to and control over the means of agricultural production and, hence, was of higher class relative to the agrariat or pcp. It remains to be clarified in this scheme whether brigade leaders should be considered part of the lower stratum of the managerial class or as part of a higher stratum in the working class. Further elaborations, however, require a separate study.

success of this "collectivisation" attempt can be attributed to the financial incentives and economic subsidies which were offered to cooperative members. The introduction of pensions for the first time may also have motivated people to become members. Moreover, the middle peasantry, the formerly despised *kulák* class (meso- and latifundist), could finally join cooperatives and even assume high political economic posts (Orolin, 1977; Swain, 1985). Household plots were also granted to those (e.g., agronomists, mechanics) who were not members of a cooperative, but who nevertheless formed part of a cooperative's labour force through their more technical contributions.

Irrespective of this, agricultural labour continued to decline from 37.7% in 1960 to 27.4% in 1965, as more of the agrariat and pcp was proletarianised. Wages and benefits for the agrariat and pcp remained lower than those in the industrial and service sectors. By 1962, 74% of the total rural population was officially below the poverty line and 70% of those rural poor were divided equally between manual and semi-skilled worker households (Corrin, 1994). By 1966, the agrariat still received only 77.2% of proletarian wages and benefits combined. As a result of government and enterprise induced disparities, women, although in the minority, began to join the increasing mass of commuters (*ingázok*) to industrial centres and households came to rely increasingly (up to 53% of total income by 1962) on incomes and subsistence generated through household plot production (Swain, 1985).

### **Household structure and rural development I: 1949-1956.**

As part of the modernisation drive, women were encouraged to emancipate themselves from household labour through proletarianisation. The government thereby purported to resolve the "woman question". The MNOT (Magyar Nők Országos Tanácsa, the National Council of Hungarian Women) was not too gradually transmogrified into a perfunctory organ of the government (Adamik, 1993; Corrin, 1994; Kürti, 1991; Landes, 1989). Women's participation in the workforce was not a novelty, especially for lower class women, as well as girls (Tóth, O., 1993: 218). However, official employment was now extended to all "semi-skilled" and "unskilled" rural labour, much of whom was comprised by women who had never before received direct compensation for their work. The Family Law, granting equal rights in marriage affairs, facilitated the option of divorce and potential de jure freedom from oppressive family relations. Women could finally partake of official paid employment irrespective of class and have the possibility of some form of independence from men (Gal, 1994; Goven, 1993).

The exigencies of industrialisation and the ideal of emancipation through proletarianisation demanded that a full citizen be constituted through labour, preferably industrial labour, rather than landed or bourgeois status (Lampland, 1995). The proletarian way to women's emancipation elided productive and reproductive labour performed within the household (Bollobás, 1993; Landes, 1989). And those, mostly male, government officials who wielded power were largely exempt from the proletarianisation requirement for achieving revolutionary class status themselves. Thus, the reorganisation of labour under this initial impetus of change succeeded more in extending the duration of daily work to many more women, irrespective of class, rather than emancipate them from household labour. In addition, manual agricultural labourers, most of whom were women, received lower average salaries than their proletarian and

"skilled" agrarian counterparts and received no social benefits (Corrin, 1994; Swain, 1985; Völgyes, 1980).

In situations where low mechanisation prevailed, "collective" farm practice was dominated by a few families and work brigades were largely composed of family units (Hann, 1980: 35-36). In this manner, important structures related to previous class relations and internal household relations were de facto reproduced (e.g., the relationship between the agrariat and estate lords). In contexts of mechanisation, the division of agricultural labour promoted inter-household class differentiation through the inception of machine stations which acted independently of farms. Machine operators and machine station managers thereby exerted power over the deployment of the forces of production (Swain, 1985). Machine station operatives were by and large "skilled" males, who received higher salaries than their agrarian counterparts.

State-socialist rural development entailed the maintenance of class-specific gendered relations of production. When land was scarce, women were expected to contribute labour directly into the agricultural production process (whether on the household plot<sup>4</sup> or the cooperative farm). In the more exceptional situations of land sufficiency, such as in the specialised producers' cooperative at Tázlár, women were virtually absent from the composition of manual labour (Hann, 1980: 52-54). Similar situations occurred in private farms, the existence of which the government permitted, albeit within rigid economic and spatial limitations (Bell, 1984).

The articulation of rural development with rabid industrialisation had a family policy concomitant, manifested through demographic regulation (i.e., the criminalisation of abortion). The industrial expansionism of Stalinist development, beleaguered by a labour shortage and Soviet pressures to increase production, required the injection of large amounts of workers. The government certainly could not permit independent, emancipated women retaining control over their own bodies (Gal, 1994). The unevenness of household work distribution, especially some of its reproductive components, could not qualify as a party policy priority for the emancipation of women.

Perhaps to alleviate the pecuniary burdens of the agrariat, household plots were assigned to cooperative members on a family basis in 1953 and so that the agrariat could engage in restricted subsistence and cash-crop production within a restricted allotment of land (Swain, 1985). The decision in many families was probably one which required the least amount of risk in procuring higher-paying salaries. Thus, government policy resulted in a gendered differentiation within the household, wherein most young and middle-aged men commuted to factories and women and the elderly mostly remained as agricultural workers. Because household plot assignment was family-based, men would have to devote some work hours to the cooperative. This marked the emergence of the "worker-peasant" household, which was to increase in importance especially after 1968 (Huszár, 1974; Swain, 1992).

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<sup>4</sup>The household plot is a generic term encompassing three types of private, small-scale production sites associated with different agricultural sectors: the *háztáji* (cooperative-related household plot), *szőlő* (countryside garden plot), and *zártkert* (enclosed house garden). The *zártkert* was part of the immediate environs of the domicile and could be part of a *háztáji*. Industrial and agricultural state firms granted *szőlő* plots (from the word meaning "grapes", due to its popularity as a vineyard plot) to their respective workers. The cooperative distributed a *háztáji* to all its member families. A *háztáji* was also granted to non-member technicians who contributed labour to co-operatives (Bell, 1984; Hann, 1980; Kovách, 1989; Swain, 1985).

In some villages, traditionally "masculine" tasks, such as tending the household plots, vineyards, orchards, and/or gardens, became "feminine" (Huseby-Darvas, 1987). Women and lower class men, most of whom were de facto excluded from proletarian emancipation, therefore contributed most of the labour to these household plots and thereby ensured subsistence for most rural households. The paucity of childcare facilities and welfare provisions (six weeks of maternity leave with 75% of the salary, breast-feeding allowance of one hour per day) combined with an absence of measures against the unequal sharing of household labour ensured that women's options would be so confined as to render most of them unable to take advantage of their new opportunities or even to become "reliable" workers contributing to uninterrupted production processes (Szalai, 1991).

### **Household structure and rural development II: 1956-1968.**

An intra-annual cyclical alternation of demand prevailed as a result of increasing mechanisation on many farms. Mechanisation was itself a government response to the labour shortages created by a policy of rapid industrialisation. Increased mechanisation occurred gradually and took over a decade to spread throughout the cooperatives (Berend, 1990). Eventually, demand decreased seasonally for manual labour (i.e., mostly women's), while it increased for "skilled" labour (i.e., mostly men's). Those women who were able to operate the newer agricultural machinery were by and large excluded from "skilled" employment. Since the work required much exertion (as if manual labour did not!), operating the machinery would have interfered with housework performance, as she would have returned home exhausted (Lampland, 1995: 189). Peak seasons nevertheless retained the labour shortage of yore, but the rest of the year featured a labour surplus (Orolin, 1977). The problem of alternating labour demand was partially resolved by the cooperative directorship with the typical underemployment measures practised in the past for manual labourers and the novelty of increased pecuniary incentives for "skilled" workers. By 1966, "only 58.7% of male members under pensionable age could be provided with full-time...employment, as could only 12% of female members" (Swain, 1985: 84-85). Rather than the ability to bestow workers with full-time employment, this practice represents the systematic inequalities fostered by patriarchal rehierarchisation, wherein the ability of training the women who already possessed much agricultural experience was precluded as a possibility a priori in order to maintain male privileges.

For much of the "unskilled" and "semi-skilled" labour force, the cooperative system still relied on a work-unit system of payment, in-kind remuneration, and much share-cropping. Share-cropping was a prevalent form of labour organisation in labour-intensive cropping systems which could not be mechanised or in labour-extensive cropping systems for which mechanisation was not yet available. It was, ironically, also a characteristic exploitative mechanism of the pre-revolutionary semi-peripheral capitalist regime. It was especially through share-cropping that women could gain mostly seasonal employment. In this new "collective" labour system, they were usually commandeered by male brigade leaders performing their duties under a mostly male directorship (Hann, 1980: 150-152; Völgyes, 1980: 427).

During the late 1950's and early 1960's, central planners became increasingly preoccupied with resolving the problem of labour surplus (Berend, 1990). Thus, abortion was gradually decriminalised and eventually permitted on demand (Gal, 1994).

Several policy measures coincided with this new problematic which effectively, if not intentionally, pressured households to modify their internal organisation of labour without altering their basic structure. The industrialisation drive was increasingly attracting and incorporating so many workers as to render childcare logistically impossible for many households, especially worker-peasant households in urban fringes. The scarcity of facilities during the previous period was amended by devoting more state investment towards increasing their number. But maintaining women within an in-kind and work-unit system of remuneration or providing economic incentives for women to withdraw from wage labour eventually proved, for an androcentric regime, to be a less expensive alternative relative to the construction and maintenance of childcare facilities (Szalai, 1991), especially in rural areas. Most economists legitimised such a reprioritisation by citing figures portraying women's employment rate as too "unstable". Women workers' average of 40-50% of work time directed at caring for children at home was regarded as disruptive of the production process, rather than an intrinsically use-value producing labour process. In 1966, the government introduced a Child Care Grant (GyES) providing a flat-rate benefit aimed at helping women remain at home beyond five months of paid maternity leave. The grant would last until the child reached 30 months of age and re-employment was assured to the same job, provided she had worked before receiving the grant for at least a year (Bollobás, 1993; Gal, 1994; Szalai, 1991; Tóth, O., 1993).

In any event, agrarian households (but not worker-peasant households) were largely isolated from such developments and the women and elderly who remained adjacent to the household mostly provided the necessary reproductive work, as in prior decades. The seasonality of share-cropping work facilitated and reinforced this household division of labour. Paid leave due to illness, paid at 50-75% of yearly income, was introduced to agricultural workers and maternity leave was extended to 20 weeks with full pay, provided 120 work days had been completed within the previous year. The highly seasonal nature of women agrarian workers posed serious obstacles to the consummation of this requirement and reinforced susceptibility to male and sometimes female managerial manipulation. That is, control over labour continued in a modified form as a gender- and class-based process (Andorka and Harcsa, 1984; Bell, 1983; Corrin, 1994; Hann, 1980; Swain, 1985).

### **The new catallactic technandrocrats: 1968-1978.**

In the late 1960's, most of the national income reserved for central accumulation was beginning to be redirected to capitalist countries in order to reduce debt. In effect, capitalist organisations, such as the IMF, indirectly appropriated the surplus-value created by Hungarian workers. Mechanisation drives thus became increasingly important as agricultural production began to be directed more towards foreign trade.

In the late 1960s the mechanization of all the main work processes was completed, and the use of artificial fertilizer trebled. Industrial-scale agriculture, involving a revolution in technology and management and a process of concentration, spread over grain and other field crops and fruit and vegetable production. The result, on the pioneering farms if not nationally, was a threefold increase in yields (Berend, 1990: 192).

Between 1960 and 1974, there was a 250% increase in the total number of tractors in the country (Friss, 1977) and fertiliser use increased from 29 kg/ha, in 1960, to 276 kg/ha, in 1975 (Völgyes, 1980: 411).

The transformation of the national economy through reform and technological change was a direct response to demands exerted by creditor countries<sup>5</sup>. Between 1971 and 1973, the value of imports from capitalist countries had increased from 28% to 30%. This increasing subordination to capitalist countries resulted from the technological dependence on highly-priced machinery imports. The technology from creditor countries, monopolised by a few large capitalist enterprises, was crucial to the type of industrial development upon which all state-socialist governments had embarked. It is thus that a minority of imports from capitalist countries came to preponderate in significance to the organisation of state-socialist economies. Import-substitution could not overcome the dependence on pivotal spare parts, machinery, and fertiliser from creditor countries (Benet, 1988; Friss, 1977: 16; Völgyes, 1980: 410-412).

In 1968, the New Economic Mechanism was ratified by the government and radically changed agricultural practice towards a catallactic (market-oriented) focus. It signified the inception of non-agricultural activities within cooperatives and state farms<sup>6</sup>. Most of the modifications allowed cooperatives the attainment of industrial enterprise characteristics. Wages, for the first time, would be treated as production costs, as they had been for decades in the industrial sector. Cooperatives were allowed to own their lands, rather than rent it from the membership<sup>7</sup>. A flat-rate land tax remained until 1980, but a progressive tax was introduced for any member's income exceeding the worker average. Machine stations, which had become too financially cumbersome for the state, were devolved to cooperative control. More significantly for household production, the household plot size limit was increased and assignment was no longer based on family but individual membership (Berend, 1990: 101-103; Swain, 1985). These policy changes induced an increase in small-scale agricultural production and decreased production costs to cooperatives for labour-intensive exportable goods. In 1977, 25% of total exports and 33% of capitalist-currency earning exports originated from small-scale production (Swain, 1985). Between 1978 and 1980, 27% of trade deficit reduction originated from agricultural exports (Újhelyi, 1988).

These alterations of the production relations centralised the decision-making processes in favour of enterprise management, who thereby attained more independent and direct control of workers. In 1970, enterprise managers determined 58.3% of investment distribution decisions. By 1985, the proportion had climbed to 68.5%. Between 1975 and 1977, this devolution of power and increasing profits from small-scale production was temporarily halted by the government; however, following a shortage prompted by a massive slaughter of pigs, the government were forced to retract their recentralisation measures. In effect, what was occurring was duel between Party bureaucrats and enterprise managers for the control over workers and the allocation of surplus-value (Böröcz, 1992; Swain, 1992: 105; Völgyes, 1980: 475). The latter symbolised the growing importance of technocrats, who were more responsive to profit and capitalist creditors' demands than Soviet political pressures. Since most of the members of this

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<sup>5</sup>The National Planning Office even acknowledged this explicitly in 1964 (Berend, 1990: 138). The Soviet Union was similarly increasingly dependent on capitalist loans.

<sup>6</sup>By 1982, non-agricultural activities surpassed 30% of total agricultural production (Benet, 1988).

<sup>7</sup>By 1966, 20% of rent enriched the income of next generation owners who had become non-agricultural workers or even non-members (Swain, 1985).



emerging elite were men and their main economic preoccupations were market-oriented, I will refer to them as *technandocrats*. To illustrate this patriarchal rehierarchisation, in 1975, out of 1591 cooperative presidents, only six (0.4%) were women. Only 9.2% of vice-presidents, 1.7% of agricultural engineers, and 6.5% of brigade leaders were women (Völgyes, 1980). Unlike Party bureaucrats and former enterprise managers, their source of power and definition of masculinity originates from their ability to control women's and lower class men's labour for their own profit, rather than centralised redistribution, and their high-level of technical training in business management (as well as a high-level of technological knowledge related to industrial production). In either case, these generally wealthier leaders and technocrats were mostly men "who earn enough so that their wives do not have to work. (A few [leaders] *are* wives, but their husbands do work.)" (Bell, 1984: 170, italics in original).

### **Household structure and rural development III: 1968-1978.**

All these NEM reforms were accompanied by the novelty of economic partnerships, whereby workers and technandocrats could utilise the infrastructure and marketing organisation of cooperatives for private gain and even establish joint ventures with foreign capitalist enterprises. Households were given incentives to retain cooperative membership: tax reductions, state aid, technical help, and fodder supplies. Moreover, membership allowed the inclusion of household plot labour for claiming social benefits and the permission to purchase land unsuitable for mechanised production. For a fee, cooperatives also could provide mechanised harvesting, sowing, and ploughing services and members would retain a harvest share in kind or in currency. This latter option was especially conducive to non-agricultural workers' so-called "second economy" activities. Social benefits were increased 1974 to the level of those of industrial workers. This was a crucial incentive to household production relations for it allowed women in member households to have a more adequate maternity and childcare allowance (Burawoy and Lukács, 1989; Corrin, 1994; Meaney, 1995; Swain, 1985).

These social benefits, which essentially attracted "skilled" men to cooperative membership, presumably "compensated" women, as an ethnographic observation from the village of Cserépfalu indicates:

Even though the wages are considerably lower here [in the state sector's light industrial employment] than either the wages of commuting men, or the incomes women secure from occasional ventures in the second (private) and third (illegal and quasi-legal) economic sectors, most women take these jobs because of their many benefits. For example, employees are entitled to paid vacations, maternity and sick leaves, partially paid post-natal leave for three years after the birth of each child, occasional bonuses in cash or in kind, and, most significantly, to retirement pensions which act to secure their relative independence in old age. (Huseby-Darvas, 1987: 27)

The result was a migration to the countryside of "skilled" workers seeking to increase their incomes, "second economy" labour hours exceeding those devoted to state jobs, and the increase of rural stratification (Répássi, 1991). In 1970, 40% of total agricultural production was estimated to derive from small-scale household plot production. By 1972, more than half of the total population lived in households which operated some form of small-scale agricultural plot, even though approximately 25% of all workers were employed in agriculture and 58% of agricultural workers were employed in non-agricultural sectors. And between 1976 and 1980, 15% of all arable land was cultivated under household plots, yielding 36% of total agricultural production. This was twice the

contribution of state farms (Benet, 1988; Swain, 1985; Völgyes, 1980). The "second economy" was actually a privatised sector predominantly supported by state-owned infrastructure and finances. The reorganisation of labour through the creation of a "second economy", which was part of the official economy<sup>8</sup>, encouraged the intensification of class differentiation and the advantages of technandrocacy in relation to workers generally.

An immediate and direct impact of the NEM on the structure of households was the official proscriptions for women regarding arduous and/or dangerous employment. This included higher-waged work such as driving the newer tractors, yet women could engage in potentially more hazardous work such as harvesting. This manoeuvre obviated the possibility of competition with those machine station operatives who joined a cooperative. A new maternity allowance lengthened leave from work and increase benefits, though not to the same level of industrial workers. Individual-based membership facilitated the development of worker-peasant households, where men could now devote their labour solely to the most remunerative jobs they could obtain. Women, whose cooperative membership secured access to a household plot, remained in control of household labour and performed nearly all agricultural tasks (Swain, 1985: 58-59). In addition, the difficulties in obtaining adequate living standards in rural areas prompted further increases in the population of *ingázok* as well as its proportion of women (Swain, 1992). The seasonal alternation of labour surpluses and shortages continued to intensify (Orolin, 1977) and the increasing mechanisation of agriculture continued to displace manual and "semi-skilled" workers.

During the late 1960's and early 1970's, most household plot production was performed by women and pensioners, who still predominated in crop cultivation and poorly paid seasonal labour composition. Women devoted an average of four hours daily to household plots, one hour more than the national average. Working women also dedicated 2.5 more hours than men on household chores (Tóth, O., 1993). In cases in which women had additional employment to household plot production, women contributed the most labour to the household plot in 65.1% of households. Where women had no other employment, the figure rose to 74.9% and in cases where women were employed outside of the household plot, the proportion was 55.3% (Swain, 1985: 94-95).

The increases in productivity necessary to counteract trade deficits and debts required that subsistence and domestic consumption be increasingly concentrated within household plot production. Women's and lower class men's household labour was now beginning to influence market relations directly. It was in this context of increasing household plot significance that more male workers began to direct much of their labour to household plot production for the internal and international market. Economic partnerships multiplied, as cooperatives increasingly contracted out the more labour-intensive aspects of production. As household production became more lucrative, women's and lower class men's labour was circumscribed to the subsistence production to which they had hitherto contributed. By the late 1970's, men's participation in small-scale production became greater than that of women, as the latter's full-time employment in non-agricultural labour increased. Nearly 100% of all "skilled" agricultural workers were

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<sup>8</sup>In 1977, the government permitted household labour to count as cooperative labour. This also had the effect of increasing bonuses for technandocrats and dilute overall wage taxes (Swain, 1992).

men, irrespective of age. Simultaneously, during the mid-1970's, workers employed in large-scale mechanised agriculture were men, probably as a direct consequence of government restrictions on women's labour (Meurs, 1994; Répássy, 1991; Swain, 1985).

In the early 1970's, the problem of seasonal surplus labour was partially resolved through the introduction of lower-paying "light" industrial jobs within the village or in its vicinity. Non-agricultural activities such as food processing comprised 1/3 of total cooperative and state farm activities. Most of the women who were displaced by the reinsertion of male workers in household and cooperative production were reinstated as cheap labour in processing and textile industries within the countryside (Huseby-Darvas, 1987; Répássy, 1991).

This spatial division of labour emerges clearly from several studies. In the village of Varsány, before 1969, women were under-employed and their work seldom included extra-domiciliary activities. With the 1969 opening of the Elzett Works factory, the full employment of these women was finally achieved. The factory, though, was located at a nearby village 5 km from Varsány and employed exclusively women villagers (Sárkány, 1983; Kovács, 1983). The tendency for the state to develop the countryside by creating incentives for women remain close to home demonstrates a (probably widespread) spatio-temporal pattern of which the investigators themselves have been curiously unaware: the higher the amount of time he spends in the household and the shorter the distance of his workplace, the lower the amount of time she spends outside the immediate abode and the shorter her distance from her (domestic) sites of labour (and the lower her income).

In the village of Tázlár, gender roles were similarly reinforced. In 1971, a spinning factory was constructed at the centre of the village and it incorporated largely women's labour. Since the skills required for domestic labour were/are generally disregarded as such, women entered the factory as "unskilled" workers under the prevailing direction of technandocrats (Hann, 1980: 144-146).

Gendered divisions of labour within the household required task-specific spatial segregation, an example of social processes ineluctably occurring over space (Massey, 1995). State-socialist policies of proletarianisation reinforced this pattern by extending its scale (from household to county). Rural spaces produced for heavy industry and technandocracy were rendered inaccessible to most women through employment discrimination practices. In this context, discrimination was spatialised through the preferential employment of men into "heavy" industrial plants, mostly located at a lengthy commuting distance from villages<sup>9</sup>, and women into "light" industrial plants, as adjacent to the household as possible (Huseby-Darvas, 1990; Lampland, 1995).

This rural development coincided with renewed restrictions on abortion for officially less active or "inactive" women (Morgan, 1984), renewed labour shortages in the industrial sector (increased pressures to raise productivity for export), extensions of maternity and childcare leave, and restrictions on divorce (Corrin, 1994; Gal, 1994; Goven, 1993). Such restrictions resulted from Oil Crisis induced demands for a larger labour force to produce more goods for export (increased economic isolation and diminishing foreign investments) and to support an insatiable military-industrial complex

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<sup>9</sup> This often required commutes of entire days, thereby requiring men, primarily, to actually live for most of the year in hostels in propinquity to industrial plants.

ready for war (increasing political retrenchment). The superseding of the birth rate by the abortion rate in 1969 probably initiated this renewed demographic preoccupation.

Villages retained the paucity of childcare facilities during this period as well. Finding full-time work was rendered nearly impossible to women in the countryside, as they remained the primary household labourers. Possessing a household plot in proximity to the house remained of great economic significance to women (Swain, 1985). In 1977, the government decided to increase agricultural production for both domestic consumption and export profit. Machinery, however, was not ubiquitous and severe shortages were commonplace in poorer cooperatives. In these circumstances, share-cropping re-emerged as a viable option for increasing production. Again, women and lower class men were mainly employed for such seasonal labour, but this time for capitalist market-oriented commerce (Völgyes, 1980).

### **Discussion and conclusion.**

This study is based on an accumulation of data so far limited by the absence of adequate gender and age differentiated statistics on income, property ownership, cooperative membership, and employment structure since 1949. Similarly differentiated data on agricultural production per sector and the value of products for state purchase and market sale per household plot worker is also as yet unavailable. Surveys are also scarce in which attempts are made to assess the accessibility and control of the means of production and the power relations entailed in decision-making processes. All of these deficiencies are also related to a general paucity of studies focused on gender relations in the area. The importance of ethnicity in inter-household differentiation (e.g., the status of Romanies) is acknowledged, but similar problems of data availability exist. For these reasons, this research should be considered as a preliminary foundation for further study.

The above qualifications notwithstanding, several conclusions can be reached from the information retrieved. The reliance of Hungarian state-socialist regimes on a modernisationist model elicited four internal contradictions which were differentially articulated within each new context of economic relations at multiple scales. First, proletarianisation was predicated upon social restratification according to gender, political status, economic sector, and "skill". The egalitarian aspects of state policy (e.g., women's emancipation, communal ownership of the means of production) conflicted with the requirements of inequalities justified by the principle of progress. This is related to the second contradiction, wherein the development of industrial capacity was predicated upon the underdevelopment of rural agricultural areas. When wealth creation was re-envisioned as possible through agriculture, state policies retained a large-scale industrial preference and promoted the increase of social inequalities through their incentive system. The third contradiction was between the construction of a classless society and the creation of a central planning apparatus, thereby differentiating planners from those for whom the plans are purportedly created. Economic differentiations and a massively unequal distribution of control over labour resulted from such a contradiction. Finally, policies aiming at the emancipation of women were concomitant with patriarchal notions of labour and the subordination of women's labour and bodies to fulfill especially upper class male prerogatives to wealth accumulation.

Each phase of rural development was articulated with specific political and economic requirements mediated through intra- and extra-societal processes and demanded specific

changes and continuities in gender relations in order to fulfill political obligations and economic targets. The process of rural development occurred through an initial and rapid phase of industrialisation and centralisation of control over production. This was followed by insurrection and a consequent reform-oriented consolidation of farming practices under cooperative and state control. The development of the rural sector was envisioned primarily through the creation of industrial centres and the proletarianisation of the peasantry. The latter could not be completed because of the concentration of investment into the industrial sector, allowing the agricultural sector to remain largely non-mechanised. Peasant agriculture, both private and cooperative, continued and supplied industry with its vital needs.

As demonstrated above, there was an inherent contradiction from the beginning regarding the organisation of household labour as a result of the modernisationist principles sustaining state-socialist rural development. Modernisation required the forced assimilation of as many workers as possible into industrial production and the subsumption of agricultural productivity under the demands related to national industrialisation and support for the Soviet industrial-military complex. The reaction to labour shortage was an immediate implementation of a mode of control over women's bodies, through the criminalisation of abortion. Industrial development also had to rely on the reproduction of the workforce, as well as the transference of accumulated capital generated by agricultural production. Without agricultural production and household labour the basic conditions for the productivity of industrial labour would have been absent. The increase in the number of workers had to be tempered by these conditions of productivity through policies which enabled household relations of production to change by redefining the source of power for masculinity. Cooperative and state farm directorship, rank within party hierarchy, and industrial "skill" became the new means through which households could be internally and relationally (through class neoformation) differentiated to allow industrialisation to occur. Commercial farming experience, in which middle-peasant men were predominant, remained an important source of influence in many villages until mechanisation was introduced.

Rural development was therefore predicated upon the emancipation of women through proletarianisation, thereby injecting more labour in the official production process, and, simultaneously, the ensured continuation of intra-household women's productive and reproductive labour which detracted from their performance as workers in the official economy. In other words, state-socialist policies of rural development required the underdevelopment of both the conditions of household production (e.g., childcare facilities) and the forces of household production (e.g., machinery to expedite household plot production). For this, patriarchal relations could not be fundamentally questioned, otherwise the disparities and asymmetries of intra-household divisions of labour should have been as much a focus of discussion as the proletarianisation of women. The division of household labour, where women contributed the most, and the division of agricultural labour, where women and lower class men performed nearly all crucial labour-intensive underpaid tasks, ensured the continuation of the concentration of wealth into the hands of higher ranking men and the reinforcement of the emerging patriarchal rehierarchisation.

The reconstitution of the founts of power for masculinity engendered class distinctions. Agrarian households characterised by manual or "semi-skilled" labour

suffered underemployment and relied on household plots mainly for subsistence. In such situations, feminine tasks remained those most associated with the home, including aspects of household plot cultivation (as in middle-peasant households before "collectivisation") and masculine ones with employment outside the home and market-oriented activities. More "skilled" worker-peasant households featured males' employment in industry and female labour in cooperative agriculture. Upper classes, such as cooperative management, had more varied arrangements, usually with household work retaining the disparities of yore, but with women's employment in more remunerative economic sectors.

With changed economic conditions, a market-oriented channelisation of agricultural production followed. In agriculture, dependence on household structure adjustments became more obvious, especially during the latter two phases of rural development, when household plot and cooperative symbiosis came to be extolled as the most effective organisational mode for a "market socialist" agriculture (Berend, 1990). Changes in family policy, mechanisation, market-oriented policies, state incentives for household production, and international pressures on national production were processes related by their reliance on the maintenance of gendered and class-based internal household divisions of labour.

Share-cropping, a domain of women's and lower class men's labour, decreased with the onset of mechanised production. Only in non-mechanised contexts did share-cropping persist as a means of channelling manual and "unskilled" labour and maintain "full employment" for the population. Mechanisation also increased the division of agricultural labour in cooperatives, with ensuing wage differentiation according to "skill", to the detriment of most women and lower class men. Cooperative agricultural production was thereby divided into permanent (male, higher class worker) and seasonal (female, lower class worker) labour. Within cooperatives, the NEM resulted in the class differentiation between a technocratic managerial elite, full-time salaried "skilled" workers, and part-time meagre-wage "unskilled" and "semi-skilled" workers, the lowest of these positions finding increasing numbers of women and lower class men. Women were mostly transferred to lower paid industrial positions in the countryside. Throughout these modifications in production relations, however, household productive and reproductive activities were mostly performed by women, who thereby ensured the maintenance of the household and its productivity. Similarly, market and state incentives to household plot production relied on changes in household relations of production such that women mostly continued contributing to subsistence cultivation and men mostly produced for the market, while retaining official wage-employment either in the industrial or the agricultural sector. A minority of women actually gained full-time positions and most were seasonally employed, especially in crop production (Swain, 1985: 94-97). Disparities within the household therefore were crucial to rural development, in which increased national productivity was emphasised.

State-socialist modernisation was predicated upon notions of rural development contingent upon historically variable multiple-scaled economic restructuring which depended on the occurrence of certain intra-household changes. In their deployment, rural development policies were simultaneously changed by the very rural household structures they sought to transform. That is, internal household changes and rural

development are mutually constitutive phenomena involved in the actualisation of societal change. Hence, I regard internal household differentiations to be of great importance in order to explain the modality of rural development.

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